BRITISH COLUMBIA

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tel (250) 387-0327
fax (250) 387-0329

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **Department store sales in BC and the two territories were up 7.8% in August, relative to the same month last year.** Nationally, department store sales increased 11.4%. The strongest year-over-year gains were posted in Alberta (13.3%) and Ontario (13.0%). Saskatchewan (11.7%) and Quebec (11.0%) also recorded double-digit growth in department store sales.

  Year-to-date, sales were up 8.2% in BC. Canadian sales were 10.0% higher than in the first eight months of last year, largely as a result of strong sales growth in Alberta (12.4%), Ontario (11.7%) and Saskatchewan (11.6%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Workers in British Columbia earned an average $616 (seasonally adjusted) per week in July.** Only Ontario ($643) and the two territories ($687 in Yukon and $733 in NWT) had higher average weekly wages. The national average was $604, with workers in Prince Edward Island having the lowest average earnings ($478). Average weekly earnings are affected by rates of pay as well as the number of hours worked each week.

  The average earnings of workers in BC were 0.2% higher in July than in the previous month. Average wages in the province have been volatile since the beginning of the year, and the increase in July partially offset a decline in average wages in the previous month. Nationally, average weekly earnings were up 0.9%, with the strongest gains recorded in New Brunswick (2.2%), Manitoba (1.6%), and NWT (1.6%). Wages were down in PEI (-0.7%) and Yukon (-0.4%).

  Source: Statistics Canada

Cooperatives

- **At the end of last year, there were 618 incorporated cooperatives (excluding credit unions) in British Columbia.** More than half (337) of them were housing cooperatives. Service cooperatives (such as worker, transportation, health care, fishing and communications cooperatives) were the next largest group, with 110 registrations, followed by production (64), consumer (52), marketing (44), and supply (11) cooperatives.

  Source: Corporate & Personal Property Registries admin. data

  The nature of cooperatives has changed significantly since they came into being as primarily consumer and agricultural organizations in the late 1800s. Credit unions first appeared in the 1930s as alternatives to more traditional financial institutions. Cooperatives now run housing developments, provide child care, and are involved in the production and marketing of foodstuffs and other goods and services. The Kootenay School of the Arts was the first post-secondary institution in the world to be organized as a cooperative. More recent initiatives include car-sharing cooperatives which are now operating in the Vancouver and Victoria areas.

  Source: Solutions 2000, Canadian Cooperative Association

Agriculture

- **Twenty-three percent of the farms in British Columbia are operated as hobby farms, according to data from the 1991 Census of Agriculture.** Ontario (where just under a quarter of the farms are operated on a hobby basis) is the only province where hobby farming is more prevalent. This type of farming is least common in Prince Edward Island (12%).

Report **Measuring Tourism**

Did you know...?
British Columbians owed $2.8 billion–or $727 per capita–on chartered bank credit cards at the end of March.

There were 50,991 hobby farms in Canada in 1991, making up about a fifth of all farms in the country. Nearly half of these farms had not been in operation at the time of the 1986 Census. While the entry rate for hobby farming is considerably higher than for all farms (14%), the exit rate for hobby farmers is also high. Thirty-five percent of the 50,991 hobby farms from 1991 were not present on the 1996 Census of Agriculture. Hobby farms are farms which are run by a primary operator who worked off the farm for at least 190 days, had no year-round paid labour and fewer than 10 weeks of hired seasonal labour. *Source: SC, Vista*

Caregivers

- **In 1996, an estimated 427,000 British Columbians (14% of the adult population) were involved in providing either formal or informal care to individuals with long-term health problems or physical limitations.** Most (356,000) of these caregivers had informal arrangements, providing child care, meal preparation, house cleaning, household maintenance, grocery shopping, transportation, banking and bill paying, or personal care. Over half (198,000) of informal caregivers were also working at a job or business. More women (199,000) than men (157,000) were caregivers. *Source: SC, General Social Survey, 1996*

- **Almost half (48%) of caregivers said that their social activities had been affected by their responsibility for someone with a special need.** Other impacts of caregiving included extra expenses (42%), a change in sleep patterns (28%), changing holiday plans (20%) and moving either themselves or the person in need of care (11%) in order to be closer together. Among caregivers who were employed, more than half (54%) said their jobs had been affected. Despite this, most caregivers seemed to feel good about what they were doing. Sixty-three percent said they nearly always felt that they were simply giving back what they had received.
Source: SC, General Social Survey, 1996

Culture

- **In 1995/96, the British Columbia government spent $67 per capita to support cultural activities in the province.** This includes, in addition to grants and day-to-day operations of government, spending on libraries, museums, heritage sites, broadcasting, and educational institutions. BC's spending was above the national average ($60). The federal government spent $39 per person, compared to $76 per capita for local governments in BC. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Nation

- **Canada's composite leading indicator continued to rise in August, increasing 0.6% from its level in July.** Eight of the ten component indices were up. The housing index continued to slip, but the decline was not enough to offset the buoyancy resulting from strong consumer and investment spending.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **The federal government's debt stood at $466 billion at the end of July.** This was the second time this year that the federal government's debt has fallen below the level reported in the same month last year. The debt had stood at $471 billion at the end of July 1996. About $20 billion of the Canadian government's debt was payable in foreign currencies, with the bulk ($446 billion) of the debt payable in Canadian dollars.
Source: Federal Department of Finance, Fiscal Monitor

- **The federal government reported a budgetary surplus of $840 million at the end of July.** Revenues were up 8.8% to $12.1 billion, while program spending declined by a similar percentage (8.1%) to $7.6 billion. Public debt interest charges were also down, falling 8.7% to $3.6 billion.
Source: Federal Department of Finance, Fiscal Monitor

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

September 26, 1997

Tourism-Related Establishments

Originally published in Feb. '97 issue of *Tourism Room Revenue*, available by annual subscription for $60 plus GST

Another way to measure the size of the tourism sector

Measuring the size of the tourism sector in B.C. has taken major strides in the past decade. Comprehensive visitor studies, the creation of estimates of GDP creation, employment, and tourism room revenue have all contributed to our knowledge and understanding of tourism in British Columbia. Statistics Canada's *Business Register* provides another mechanism – a way of counting how many tourism-related[1] business establishments[2] are in the province. Tourism-related industries, for the purposes of this analysis, are those that are largely dependent on tourism activity.

Food and beverage dominates

In 1996, there were 149,315 establishments in British Columbia. Of these, one in ten (15,753) were tourism-related. Well over half of the tourism-related establishments were in the food and beverage service industry. Only one in six tourism-related establishments were in the next largest industrial group, transportation (which includes travel agencies).

Industrial Group	Establishments	% of total
Food & Beverage	8,582	54%
Transportation	2,581	16%
Accommodation	2,005	13%
Attractions	1,411	9%
Adventure tourism	1,174	7%
TOTAL	15,753	

[1] A precise definition of "tourism-related" is given in the BC Stats publication *Employment In Tourism-Related Industries, 1984-1996*.

[2] An establishment is the smallest unit of a company capable of reporting full financial statistics. Establishments are often equivalent to "plants" or "locations".

Most establishments are in Mainland/Southwest

One out of every two tourism-related establishments in B.C. is located in the Mainland/Southwest Development Region. Only 15% of the establishments are located outside the three southwestern development regions.

Development Region	Establishments	% of total
Mainland/ Southwest	8,353	53%
Vancouver Island/Coast	2,813	18%
Thompson/ Okanagan	2,215	14%
Kootenay	851	5%
Cariboo	700	4%
North Coast	299	2%
Northeast	293	2%
Nechako	219	1%
TOTAL[3]	15,753	

Most are small businesses

Nearly two-thirds of tourism-related establishments have fewer than 10 employees. Very few (under 2% of the total) have 100 or more employees.

Number of employees	Establishments	% of total
1 - 4	6,763	43%
5 - 9	3,069	19%
10 - 19	2,702	17%
20 - 49	2,256	14%
50 - 99	671	4%
100 - 199	199	1%
200+	93	1%
TOTAL	15,753	

[3] Components do not sum exactly to the total because 10 establishments did not have geographic codes.

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
Tel: (250) 387-0327 Fax: (250) 387-0329 Web: http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca E-mail: BCSTATS@fincc04.fin.gov.bc.ca

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,933.3	2.0
Canada	30,286.6	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jun	2,811	4.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,190	-10.4
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,706	3.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Aug '97	on year ago
BC	139.9	1.1
Canada	138.2	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,029	2.1
Employed - BC	1,856	2.8
Unemployed - BC	172	-5.0
		Aug '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.5	9.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.0	9.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Sep 24/97	Sep 25/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	5.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.65	6.13
- 5 year	6.85	7.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Sep 24/97	Sep 25/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3873	1.3665
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7208	0.7318
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jul '97	on year ago
BC	621.13	0.5
Canada	605.00	2.6

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Please Respond

Our sincere thanks to all those who have responded to our subscriber survey.

We would like to hear from more of you. Its not too late to return the questionnaire that went out with last week's broadcast. Your feedback will help us to improve this service. So please take a minute to let us know if you are happy now or suggest where we might go from here.

Thank-you!

Released this week by BC STATS

- Consumer Price Index, August 1997
- Business Indicators, September 1997
- Current Statistics, September 1997

Next week

- Migration Highlights,

BC STATS, Min. of Finance & Corporate Relations, Box 9410 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9V1
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